

# RED WEEKLY

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# VIETNAM — IMPERIALISM BITES THE DUST

THE LIBERATION OF HUE AND DA NANG, the fall of the Central Highlands in Southern Vietnam and the virtual collapse of the South Vietnamese puppet army represent an enormous victory not only for the Vietnamese people, but for the international working class movement as a whole.

The Indochinese liberation forces have demonstrated by their offensives in Southern Vietnam and Cambodia that they understand that the relationship of forces between imperialism and revolution is *international*. This has enabled them to exploit the divisions and weaknesses inside the American ruling class and the troubles of imperialism elsewhere in the world to launch a final offensive to liberate Indochina.

The total lack of support for the puppet regime has been demonstrated very clearly by the rapidity with which they have had to abandon large areas to the liberation forces. In less than a month nearly half of the puppet army has been either defeated or disintegrated by the National Liberation Front's offensive. Nine

By  
**TARIQ ALI**

provinces and 11 major towns have been liberated, leaving only the Mekong Delta and a few regions outside Saigon in the hands of the puppet regime.

The liberation of the Central Highlands was facilitated by the decision of over 1000 CIA-trained Montagnards (mountain tribesmen) to desert and join the NLF. The effect of this defection by an imperialist-trained elite corps on the morale of the puppet army was catastrophic. For revealing this fact to the world a French journalist was executed in Saigon by the military police. The decision of the US Congress to deny President Ford the money required to fight 'North Vietnamese aggression' was undoubtedly the final straw that broke the back of the South Vietnamese regime.

The victories of the Indochinese people represent a continuing rise of the world revolution, and demonstrate that despite the setbacks suffered in Chile and elsewhere, American imperialism has not been able to shift the international relationship of forces back in its favour.

## ISOLATED

However the whole of the country has not been freed. The Cambodian and South Vietnamese capitals of Phnom Penh and Saigon are increasingly isolated and bound to fall. But how will they fall? There are two possibilities: one is an outright military victory leaving the Provisional Revolutionary Government (PRG) of South Vietnam and the Cambodian Red Khmers in complete control; the second is through pseudo-coalition governments with other groups, but in reality dominated by the NLF and Red Khmers, as a period of transition to a complete take-over in name as well as deed.

Of these two possibilities the first is clearly the most desirable and is within the power of the liberation forces. But here some of the weaknesses of the liberation organisations come into play — particularly their failure to admit the socialist character of the revolution. An outright

military victory would involve the immediate setting up of a *workers' state*, and the dismantling of the whole puppet set-up. Something would have to be established in its place, and the population of the cities would have to be organised and united.

The fact that the PRG has up till now not understood the need to create organs of popular power has left serious gaps in their strategy. Their way of resolving this problem has been the 'coalition government' scheme.

But even if a dummy coalition government were set up, this would not represent a capitulation on the part of the NLF to imperialism or its local allies: it would merely delay the creation of a *nationwide* revolutionary administration.

What is beyond doubt however, is that the United States, and imperialism as a whole, has suffered a major defeat. Its echoes will be heard throughout the world — not least in Portugal and Spain where the revolutionary struggle of the working class is already underway.

Every voice in the British workers' movement should now be raised to herald these great victories and to demand that the Labour Government breaks off all links with the rotten and tottering puppet regimes and recognises the Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam.

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## ND DRIVE — FUND DRIVE — FUND DRIVE — FUND DRIVE

The end of March is now here but we have not made the absolutely essential £400. We are still short of £80. That puts us in a hell of a spot. As usual all the end of the month bills are crashing down on us and unless we make up that deficit we have no chance of meeting them.

We ask our readers to make a special effort to send us an extra contribution this week. It is a simple choice. Either we get the money or the *Red Weekly* will have to make cut-backs. In the present political situation we need to expand the paper not reduce its effectiveness. So we have no hesitation in asking you to dig down really deep for our paper.

Our readers in Leeds, Glasgow, Manchester and Sheffield have not yet sent their money. We really do rely on them this week. We are sure you will not let us down. Every penny you can scrape, send to 182 Pentonville, London, N.1.

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DOCKERS  
MOVE TO  
EXTEND  
FIGHT  
FOR JOBS



Dockers voted last Friday 28 March to continue their unofficial strike that has brought London docks to a halt for the last four weeks. A mass meeting decided to continue action until the employers agree to pay the men for the two days they were locked out, agree to return to Tilbury ships diverted by the strike, and give a guarantee against disciplinary action.

Despite a well-orchestrated campaign in the press to suggest support for the strike amongst London's 11,000 dockers was falling off, the dockers are again attempting to extend the strike nationally. As we go to press Hull dockers are due to meet to consider another plea to join the strike. So far support received from other ports has been non-existent.

Yet the dockers struggle is a vital fight for jobs. The basic issue is the same as in the 1972 strike that led to the near-general strike to free the five dockers imprisoned for picketing under the Tories' Industrial Relations Act — containerisation. The dockers who have lost thousands of jobs due to containerisation — over 10,000 in London since 1967 — are claiming that the stuffing and stripping of containers,

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North Vietnamese liberation forces, pictured during an attack on South Vietnamese marines in 1971, inside Quang Tri province. Since that time despite the Paris Peace Accords and heavy bombing by US aircraft, they have expanded their influence and this week their biggest prize was won — the city of Da Nang.

# IRELAND

## THE CHOICE FOR LABOUR

The TROOPS OUT NOW demo on 6 April organised by TOM will once again be unable to hold its final rally in Trafalgar Square, as the Secretary of State for the Environment, Mr Crosland, has again turned down their application without explanation. A picket of his offices on Wednesday 26 March was therefore arranged at short notice by TOM supporters. The demo, this Sunday, will start at Clerkenwell Green at 1.00 p.m.

Photo: JOHN RASMUSSEN (Report)



LAST WEEK two very different statements on the situation in Ireland came out of the Labour Party.

The Prime Minister, Harold Wilson, in announcing the date for the elections to the Constitutional Convention, had this to say: 'The Convention will be elected by the people of Northern Ireland. It will meet with Ulster members representing Ulster people. It offers a great chance for people here to work together to produce proposals which can be a major step on the road to lasting peace. Such an Ulster solution would be the best solution.'

### REALITY

But the reality behind this statement was made very clear in a statement from 10 Labour MP's and one independent MP (from the north of Ireland), calling on the British labour movement to support a national trade union delegate conference on Ireland. This statement said in part: 'Events in Northern Ireland are moving rapidly towards a new and potentially even more dangerous climax. The elections to the Constitutional Convention are likely to result in the election of a large number of supporters of the United Ulster Unionist Council. The Government will then be faced with a choice between handing over power to messrs Paisley, Craig and West or continuing with Direct Rule. Either way means continued violence and repression'. This is the reality of the democratic sounding clarion call of Harold Wilson that the Convention will 'allow the people of Northern Ireland to sort out their own future'.

The Constitutional Convention comes in the wake of the victory of the loyalist general strike last May which kicked the Sunningdale 'power sharing' assembly into touch. This forced British imperialism to make a sharp turn to the right to regain control of the situation, and the Labour Government embarked on a policy of compromise with the loyalists.

In his speech in Belfast announcing

the date of the Convention, Wilson was very careful not to mention those fateful words 'power sharing', for every single one of the factions of the loyalist UUUC has rejected this concept. Indeed, Paisley has declared that the outcome of the Convention will be 'No power sharing, no Irish dimension and the return of the B-Specials.' And the loyalists have the strength to impose this.

### TRICKY

The Labour Government is attempting a very tricky manoeuvre. Every one of the attempts at a 'solution' by British imperialism over the past period has floundered on the rock of the resistance of the minority.

Indeed any 'solution' proposed within the framework of the northern six county state can succeed on one condition and one condition only—that the nationalist minority is crushed. For the six counties is a totally artificial unit. It can exist only on the basis of preserving the privileged position of the Protestants at the expense of the Catholic minority. Any move by the minority to throw off their oppression throws into question the very existence of the six county state.

The Convention can only be successful if the defences of the minority are broken down. For the Labour Government and imperialism, this means getting the RUC into the Catholic communities to enforce the 'rule of law'.

For a whole period, no force within the Catholic community would ever think of going along with such a move, the hostility of the Catholics to this sectarian force is so great. But the carrot of some sort of 'participation' for the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP) may encourage them to change their position on this question. Meanwhile the RUC is already grubbing the Catholic areas under cover of the Provisional ceasefire and the protection of the troops. This was the meaning of Wilson's

statement that: 'All members of the community have the same right to freedom under the law. All bear the same responsibility to maintain the law.' In other words all participants in the 'solution' that comes from the Convention must take responsibility for the entry of the RUC into the Catholic areas. But the entry of the RUC means the possibility once more of recreating the Protestant ascendancy. Such is the reality of the new 'Ulster solution, by Ulster people'.

The Constitutional Convention, then, is just one more of a long line of 'British solutions' to the problems of the Irish people. It can only be successful through repression of the minority. This is the role of the British army. We in this country must fight for the army to be immediately withdrawn, as it alone can guarantee the success of the British Government and loyalists.

### BRITISH SOLUTION

British workers are beginning themselves to experience the 'peacekeeping' role that the army plays in disputes such as that in Glasgow. What's more, the whole operation of the troops is bringing home to British workers what this means in Ireland too. The upcoming trade union delegate conference will allow the spreading of this understanding to wider layers inside the working class.

There is an alternative policy for the Irish people: British imperialism must get out and allow the Irish people to determine their own future.

The Constitutional Convention cannot allow the will of the Irish people to be expressed. When Harold Wilson says, 'Perhaps the reason some of the solutions broke down was the feeling in Northern Ireland that they had been imposed from outside', he is referring to the 'feelings' of the sectarian loyalists. British workers must reject the framework of the six counties, and respond to the real aspirations of the Irish people as a whole. The condition of this is that British imperialism and British troops get their nose out of Ireland's affairs. Brian Grogan



## PACIFISTS APPEAL FOR UNION SUPPORT

Dear Sisters and Brothers:

We the undersigned are seven of the 15 people who have recently been victimised by the Government in relation to an information sheet, produced by the British Withdrawal from Northern Ireland Campaign for the benefit of British soldiers serving or likely to serve in Northern Ireland. All of us (bar one recently released from prison after distributing a similar leaflet) have been charged with conspiracy to contravene the Incitement to Disaffection Act. As trade unionists, we appeal to all our comrades in the labour movement to demand that these charges be dropped immediately.

We are living in a time of increasing government oppression. Antiquated, undemocratic pieces of legislation, like the Incitement to Disaffection Act and the conspiracy laws, are more and more being used to deal with progressives and activists who exert their rights as trade unionists or who challenge the state. Not so long ago, the five dockers were jailed—they were released only in response to the threat of a general strike. Now the Shrewsbury pickets languish in prison.

The Incitement to Disaffection Act is a threat to free speech; it also denies soldiers the right to receive information themselves and engage in political discussion. The conspiracy laws are horrendous: normal rules of evidence can be ignored when conspiracy charges are brought, and those found guilty can actually be imprisoned for life!

The use of the British army in Northern Ireland against the working class of both communities can be seen as a preview of how it may be used this side of the Irish Sea. All trade unionists should remember that if troops are brought in to break strikes and are given leaflets urging them not to serve in this way, those leaflets too could find themselves charged with Incitement to Disaffection.

So the case of the 14 now facing conspiracy charges is very much the business of the labour movement. We therefore urge all our fellow trade unionists to campaign in every possible way, on the shop floor and at branch, district, regional and national level, for the immediate dropping of these iniquitous charges and the abolition of the conspiracy laws and Incitement to Disaffection Act.

We should be glad to hear from any trade unionists who wish in any way to support the Defend the 14 Campaign.

Solidarity, peace and freedom.

Bill Hetherington	(defendant, NALGO)
John Hyatt	(defendant, NUJ)
Frank Keeley	(defendant, NALGO)
Paul Seed	(defendant, NUS)
Bob Thomas	(defendant, TGWU)
Gwyn Williams	(defendant, NALGO)
Pat Arrowsmith	(ex-defendant, TGWU)

## 'Whites only' -on our doorstep

IN ORDER to join the Labour Club in Southall you have not only to be a paid up trade union member you have to be white as well.

Although the club's management committee only voted recently, by 5 votes to 3, to exclude blacks explicitly, the policy has existed implicitly for years. Even when an Asian or a West Indian entered the club as a visitor there would be a sudden quiet and all eyes would go towards the door. The message from white club members was clear, and it was not a friendly one.

However, because of the fact that there was no formal colour bar the local labour movement was able to turn a blind eye. In fact the Labour Party even rents rooms there, despite an incident a couple years ago when they were told to stop holding their annual dinner and dance in the club because some of the guests were non-white. The fact is that this club has such long standing relations with the local labour movement that nobody wanted any fuss. 'We'll change it from the inside', people said.

### BOYCOTT CALL

Now, at the initiative of members of Southall's large immigrant population, Ealing Community Relations Council has called on the trade unions and the Labour Party to take a stand. Under the real threat of losing many immigrant votes, the latter will probably cut their links with the club. But it is still up to trade unionists to take to task their white brothers and sisters in the club.

We should act against any racist club. It is precisely on the divisive issues such

as racism against blacks and Irish, such as the oppression of women, that socialists and trade unionists cannot afford any compromise. The Ealing Community Relations Council is calling on unions to stop deliveries to the club and for union members to boycott the club.

'It is a matter for the trade union branches to discuss', says Jimmy Barzey, secretary of the Afro-Caribbean Association, 'because every trade union is on record as saying that they oppose the House of Lords decision on the question of private clubs, right? And if they are so sincere that they disagree with the Lords' decision, why can't they instruct all members not to obey?'

### CAPITALIST LAWS

'It is a call that we had to make, because for years when the trade union movement sat down and said they couldn't do anything they were only just playing with words. . . The laws of this country have never been made for the working man, and it is not even up to the black people.'

'When we talk about this it is not just a black people's struggle, you know, because tomorrow it is going to be the poor whites, it's going to be the Irish, it's going to be the Welsh, it's going to be this, it's going to be that—you know it's the working class that we are on about.'

'And if any members of the labour movement, of the trade union movement, have got any illusions that we shouldn't worry about this club because it is only the black people, they don't know what they are talking about. It's the same thesis that allows us to become wage slaves as we are today. . . it's the same patronising statement that they are making against women.'

# HOW TO FIGHT THE EEC

## Import control or planned economy?

THE PAST WEEK has brought another flurry of moves from the Labour leadership to prevent any kind of democratic expression of the opposition of the workers' movement to the EEC.

The date of the referendum has been pushed forward to 5 June in order to try and block any real campaign for a 'no' vote from getting off the ground, while the Government has been churning out vast quantities of a new White Paper backing the capitalist EEC to the hilt, all to trumpet calls of the capitalist press.

To top it all off, anti-Market Ministers have been told that they will not be allowed to express their views during the debate in Parliament on the EEC.

### MANOEUVRING

This comes just after the skilful manoeuvring of Wilson and the pathetic capitulation of leading Labour 'lefts' has prevented the machinery of the Labour Party from being committed to the fight against the Market. This decision of the Labour Party NEC flies in the face both of the needs of the working class and the views of the majority of Labour Party and trade union militants. It simply serves to show once more how the social democrats' bankrupt idea of moving towards socialism through Parliamentary activity prevents them from consistently defending the interests of the working class. For it is the left's fear of 'disrupting' the Labour Government and jeopardising its position in Parliament that Wilson and the right have been able to rely on to club their pathetic opposers into impotence.

But it is not only on the question of how to fight the Common Market that the lefts are bankrupt on, but also the question of what to fight for instead of the capitalist EEC.

The programme of the lefts for

THE NATIONAL FRONT suffered yet another defeat on Tuesday 25 March when they marched through Islington, London in an attempt to defy the ban imposed on their use of the Town Hall by the local Labour Council.

Despite a national mobilisation, the NF turned out barely 400 union-jack waving fascists. And as they passed the Town Hall their drums were drowned by the deafening chants of a counter-demonstration of well over 1000 anti-fascists organised by Islington Trades Council. This was supported by Southwark, Hackney, and Battersea & Wandsworth Trades Councils, along with North London Teachers Association, Islington NALGO and various other trade union branches. Among the political organisations represented were the Labour Party Young Socialists, Communist Party, International Marxist Group, IS and the Workers Socialist League.

Speaker after speaker from the platform erected by the Trades Council stressed the need to drive the fascists off the streets, and seven Labour councillors walked out of the Council Meeting in progress at the Town Hall to thank the demonstrators for turning up in force. But for the presence of 2000 police (an all London mobilisation which must have cost tens of thousands of pounds) and the wariness of demonstrators at the possibility of provocations, in light of the recent remarks of Sir Robert Mark, the fascists would have suffered a yet more crushing defeat.

### BREEDING GROUND

Unfortunately many speakers from the platform missed the point by not attacking the ground on which the fascists breed.

It was left to Ted Coxhead of the IMG to point out that it was the nationalistic campaign being waged by the Labour left against the Common Market which actually provided the launching pad from which the National Front could campaign for all their



Chauvinism of Labour lefts encourages groups like these Lancashire textile workers to demand action against cheap imports—an attempt to export capitalism's problems onto the backs of other workers.

Photo: CHRIS DAVIES (Report)

'after withdrawal' is totally confused. The biggest item they have been stressing recently is a scheme of 'import controls'—but at the same time they argue that a free trade agreement could easily be negotiated with the EEC once we got out! Moreover, while they slate the EEC for not doing enough about the position of Third World countries, their chauvin-

ism and chatter about stopping 'foreign competition' inspires groups like the Lancashire textile workers to demand action against cheap imports from Third World countries.

### REACTIONARY

The idea of solving Britain's economic difficulties through 'import controls' is both absurd and reactionary. In so far as it involves excluding

## economy?

imports from parts of the world under the heel of imperialism, it means trying to export our economic problems onto the backs of those who can least afford it. But even that sort of reactionary project would backfire—because other, more powerful and efficient capitalist countries would do exactly the same to us. In that sort of trade war, backward British capitalism is strictly a loser.

So the result of 'import controls' under a capitalist system would be the throttling of British exports, resulting in an even worse economic crisis and mass unemployment, while the cost of living would be pushed up by the substitution of more expensive home-produced goods for cheaper imports.

The sort of problems that British capitalism would be faced with if it was forced to withdraw from the Common Market could only be dealt with in two ways. From the standpoint of the capitalists, they could try to smuggle in by the back door what the working class had booted out by the front: by negotiating a free trade agreement with the EEC they could try to continue the integration of the British capitalist economy with that of their European capitalist partners, hoping that this process, and the strengthening of the Common Market's political machinery in the meantime would eventually suck Britain back in again. This is the view already being propounded by that leading representative of the capitalist class, *The Economist*.

### SOCIALISM

The other solution—the only one in the interests of the working class—is the creation of a socialist economy, based on the nationalisation of the

major means of production and economic planning. Part of the planning of a socialist economy would, of course, involve control over imports and foreign trade in general.

But the aim of this would not be to create some crazy 'British' economy cut off from the world economy and the international division of labour forged through centuries of capitalist development. On the contrary, the socialist control of foreign trade would aim to extend and refine this international division of labour with a view to producing the most mutually beneficial world division of labour and pattern of trade: it would be a policy directed towards the development of a planned, socialist economy on a world scale.

In relation to those countries bled dry by imperialism, instead of trying to export our problems to them through capitalist 'import controls', socialist policy would seek, through aid and trading agreements based on relations of equality, to stimulate their economic development and thus our mutual trade. Even more important for the development of a world planned economy would be the establishment of close economic and trade links with COMECON—the economic federation of the workers' states of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.

Such agreements would stimulate foreign trade and allow us to take into account the international distribution of natural and social resources to produce the world's necessities in the most efficient and cheapest fashion, thus ensuring the smoothest and most rapid growth of the living standards of all of humanity.

Chris Balfour

## 2000 police defend 400 fascists



Photo: CHRIS DAVIES (Report)

racist, anti-Irish and chauvinist ideas inside the working class.

Again, the present bi-partisan policy of the Labour Government in relation to the North of Ireland, its preparation to hand over power to the Loyalists, and the introduction of the so-called 'Anti-Terrorism Act', all provide the dung which will nurture the fascists.

The fascists would dearly like to provoke the left in the hope of seeing a further strengthening of the state, but the Labour Government is itself contributing to this process by keeping the Shrewsbury Two inside and allowing the police to arrest ten more pickets in the Eldon Square dispute in Newcastle.

### CONFUSION

It is no accident that the National Front chooses to campaign on the Common Market at the present time. Massive confusion exists inside the Labour movement because opposition to the EEC by the Labour left and Communist Party is based on defence of 'national sovereignty' and parliamentary rule. Instead of clear-cut opposition to the Common Market as a capitalist

institution, the Labour left and the CP—because they talk about a 'national interest', implying that there are interests that stand above the class struggle—end up peddling the same chauvinist nonsense on which the National Front and Enoch Powell (who also defend 'national sovereignty' against the EEC) breed.

The working class has no interest in defending British capitalism and the British state. A socialist campaign against the EEC must fight both for rejection of the capitalist Common Market and for a united struggle by European workers towards the United Socialist States of Europe.

As a first step towards this type of workers' campaign, the International Marxist Group fights for the exclusion of all capitalist politicians—not just Enoch Powell and the National Front—from the anti-EEC campaign. It is only by combatting the racist and nationalist ideas that already exist inside the labour movement that we will be able to drive the fascists from the streets for good.

James Drake

## SPOT THE FASCIST!

*Red Weekly* has recently had occasion to report on the increasing number of attempts by National Front thugs at physical disruption of meetings organised by trade union or socialist organisations. These included two anti-racist meetings in the Wandsworth and Battersea area, one organised by the local Teachers' Association (NUT), the other by the Trades Council.

A report of these events in the local paper, the *South London Press* drew a quick response from a member of the NF's directorate, one Peter Williams. As usual, he attempted to portray the Front as just another normal, 'reasonable' political organisation concerned to 'air sincere differences of opinion'. However *Red Weekly* is able to reveal that a look at Williams' background,

like those of Tyndall and Webster, gives his fascist game away completely. Indeed, the following record would be hard to beat!

- \* Joined the Hitler Youth around 1932 while at school in Germany.
- \* Joined Mosley's fascist Black Shirts around 1935.
- \* Deserted from the Merchant Navy in 1937 to go and fight for Franco in Spain.
- \* Later a leading member of the Northern League, an organisation dedicated to winning power for the 'master race'.

Williams, now Southern Regional Organiser of the NF, is currently plotting with Tyndall and Webster to take over the NF leadership and oust the 'softies' like Kingsley Read and Painter.

# THROW THE CIA OUT!

DESPITE DISCLOSURES about the CIA's activities in Britain, the media has been reluctant to use this 'good story'. Nor have Mr Wilson and his colleagues in the cabinet shown much zeal into enquiring into CIA activities.

Neither Wilson nor the press can complain that there is a shortage of juicy well-backed exposures about this sinister organisation.

## HEAD MAN

The head of the CIA in London until very recently was Cord Meyer. Mr Meyer, who played the role of a wealthy socialite, was the man who tugged the strings behind the CIA puppet Jay Lovestone. Lovestone—an ex-leader of the American CP—was for a time the Director of International Affairs for the AFL-CIO, which is the equivalent of the TUC. Considered something of an expert on trade union infiltration, Meyer is known to have assiduously cultivated contacts in the British unions.

Ex-CIA agent Philip Agee has pointed out that the London agents of the CIA are specifically concerned with the 'penetration' and 'manipulation' of 'political parties and trade unions'. The CIA operation in Britain gets backing and support from outfits like the Special Branch who have a keen interest in penetrating the trade union movement. A hotel worker in Brighton who made a practice of passing himself off as a left-winger recently admitted that he had been working for the Special Branch.

## FINK

One of the tasks of this fink was to pass on information about rank-and-file activities and tell them what the various left groups were doing in the



Trying to keep under cover—Sidney Bearman of the US Embassy in London, whose official listing as a 'senior analyst' in the 'political liaison' section is usually discreet language for 'CIA agent'

unions. He admitted that a Special Branch man asked him whether he would like a full-time job in the union!

Information on the activities of the revolutionary groups inside the unions is freely traded between the CIA and British secret services.

Elliot Richardson, the new US Ambassador to London, made no

bones about this when he told the Senate Relations Committee '...there is close cooperation between the CIA and their British colleagues'.

The CIA does not confine its work to simply collecting information. Murder and mayhem are part of its stock in trade. The CIA were deeply involved in the Kennedy

assassination and are considered responsible for the spate of 'strange' deaths of those witnesses whose evidence could have blown sky high the patently rigged material that came out of the Warren Commission.

Never choosy about its company, the CIA arranged for the Mafia to

put out a contract to kill Fidel Castro. Two one-time aides of Robert Kennedy blew the gaff on this to the *New York Times*. They say that the CIA were forced to give Kennedy an assurance in writing that the assassination plans had been dropped.

Despite all their tirades against Shelepin, the press are reticent about the information that they have on Meyer and his band of political assassins and 'dirty tricks' specialists. The capitalist press however are not interested in stories—no matter how 'good' they are—which reveal the way that capitalism actually operates. *Guardian* editor Alastair Hetherington, that well-known defender of press freedom, recently suppressed a major article exposing CIA activities.

Wilson recently told the House of Commons that he would not hesitate to hold an independent inquiry into CIA activities in Britain should evidence be presented that CIA agents were operating under diplomatic cover here. But this is no more than an attempt to fob off the 34 Labour MPs who put down a motion naming ten US Embassy staff members said to be working for the CIA.

Such an inquiry, Wilson fears, would lead right back to the Special Branch itself and their complicity with the CIA. The state is deeply involved in sabotage, espionage and spying on the trade unions. And the Labour Government uses that information.

It allocates funds and resources for the work of the Special Branch. It does not, will not, permit any inquiry which interferes with the anti-working class activity of the police.

THE VISIT of Alexander Shelepin to Britain at the invitation of the British TUC should cause little rejoicing amongst trade unionists. Shelepin is a Communist Party bureaucrat in the Soviet Union, and the ease with which he moved from head of the hated KGB to 'leader' of the trade unions in the mid-1960s demonstrates the throttling grip of the bureaucracy over the working class.

But concern for the rights of workers in the Soviet Union, and defence of the social gains which continue to exist as a result of the 1917 Revolution and the introduction of a planned economy, are not the concern of those who oppose his visit to Britain. The hysterical campaign being run by the *Daily Mail*, a paper which has supported Hitler, Mosley, and the Chilean generals in its time, is not aimed at Shelepin but at the whole Soviet system.

At a time of deepening economic and social crisis, many more workers will begin to look at the successes of the planned economy in largely eliminating inflation and unemployment; they will see its potential despite the massive social privileges and monopoly of political power held by the bureaucrats like Shelepin.

This is why the International Socialists make such a mistake in equating Shelepin with the CIA. The position put forward in their paper, *Socialist Worker*, of 'neither CIA nor KGB' aligns them with the most reactionary elements in British society. It is because of their non-Marxist idea that Russia is 'state capitalist' that they are unable to distinguish between the single most important intelligence agency of world imperialism and what is part of the bureaucracy (however degenerate and opposed to the real interests of the working class) of the workers' movement. It is like saying that Jack Jones and Hugh Scanlon—part of the bureaucracy of the workers' movement in capitalist society who help to maintain



Alexander Shelepin— from chief cop to trade union boss: a shift possible only where the bureaucrats control not only the workers' movement but the state machine as well

capitalism—are exactly the same as Edward Heath or Margaret Thatcher.

Similarly, in a country where capitalism has been overthrown, the bureaucracy of the workers' movement—if one emerges due to the degeneration of the revolution—becomes the bureaucracy of the workers' state, not a new capitalist class. It will 'defend' the revolution, in the same way that Scanlon, Jones and the TUC opposed the Industrial Relations Act: not in the interests of the working class, but to defend their own material privileges. Because the IS cannot understand the two-sided nature of the Soviet Union—at once a workers' state and ruled by a ruthless bureaucratic caste—they are incapable of distinguishing themselves from the most

anti-Soviet elements of British society.

If they were to apply the logic of their position on the Soviet Union to this country, they would end up by saying that the trade unions have to be smashed because they are dominated by bureaucrats—not that it is necessary to defend the unions unconditionally as a precondition for overthrowing the bureaucracy.

This is why *Red Weekly* does not oppose Shelepin's visit. What socialists in Britain should be demanding, however, is that trade union delegations of rank-and-file workers, and not just exchanges between the bureaucracy, should be allowed to travel freely between Britain and the Soviet Union in order to develop real international workers' links.

## SHELEPIN -TUC

### What's at stake?

As a herald to Shelepin's visit the *Morning Star*, paper of the British Communist Party, has been running a series of articles by Mick Costello extolling the merits of Soviet trade unions. Although he stresses their involvement in many aspects of social and cultural life—such as housing—at no time does he point out their domination by the bureaucracy and their use not to defend the workers' interests but simply to execute the plan.

It is only this role as part of the state apparatus that explains the ease with which Shelepin could be transferred from heading the KGB, to holding four key party posts, to leading the trade unions, without ever being a worker, leading a strike, or even carrying out the most mundane routine of a lower level trade union official. Below, *Red Weekly* looks at the reality of trade unionism in the Soviet Union.

The mass of workers in the Soviet Union are not involved in the drawing up and implementation of the economic and social plan. Instead, the trade unions are an extension of the state apparatus for the execution of the plan without consultation or regard to the interests of the workers.

When agreements are made between management and workers in a particular factory—who all belong to the same union because the bureaucrats say the Soviet Union is 'socialist' and class antagonisms are therefore impossible—they amount to little more than rubber-stamping the proposals dictated by the bureaucracy through the targets set for wages, productivity and output in the plan.

The lack of workers' democracy, of workers' involvement in working out the targets for the plan, has resulted in huge discrepancies between available resources, investment programmes and production targets. Instead, competition for meeting production targets, without overall attention to the plan, is encouraged—often re-

sulting in vast quantities of useless and shoddy products.

Although technically a worker cannot be sacked without being offered another job, so-called 'labour discipline' is dealt with by offering jobs in Siberia. Despite the fact that strikes are illegal, many have taken place since 1956. The most famous of these was at Novocherkassk in 1962, when troops moved in and killed several hundred workers.

It is to the workers and revolutionary dissident intellectuals in the Soviet Union that the British trade unions should be holding out their hand. This way we can both learn from the victory of the Russian workers and peasants in 1917 in eliminating capitalism and introducing a planned economy, and help the process of sweeping away the bureaucracy from the Russian workers' state. This can only help our job of smashing the bureaucracy in the British workers' movement and getting on with our own socialist revolution.

# DOUBLE DEALING IN ARAB GULF

On 6 March an agreement to end the 'politics of confrontation' between the two Middle Eastern regimes of Iraq and Iran was publicly launched in the shape of a tender, loving embrace between two former 'arch-enemies' - the Shah of Iran, and the Iraqi Vice-President, Saddam Husayn. The Iranian-Iraqi agreement called for the establishment of 'cordial relations' between the two regimes, on

its Iraqi wing. The 6 March accords do away with these obstacles, at least for the time being, and thereby open up for the Shah the possibility of working along with the Arab ruling classes on a number of fronts - most notably oil diplomacy and political stabilisation of the area.

It was no coincidence that the accords were announced at a conference of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and that



The Pesh Merga - Kurdish militia - in action. Their struggle has been badly smashed by the counter-revolutionary agreement between the Iraqi and Iranian regimes.

the basis that the Iraqis would concede to the Shah all his territorial demands along the Shatt-Al-Arab waterway in the south. Furthermore, both regimes committed themselves to sealing off their borders to all so-called 'subversive activities'.

The political significance of these two accords, however, goes much deeper than their stated content. What is at stake is nothing less than a concerted drive to crush two related revolutionary factors in the Middle East - the struggle of the Kurds for self-determination in Northern Iraq, and that of the Arab people in Dhofar against their local ruling class. A further by-product of the accords has already involved the repression of Iranian opposition groups based in Iraq.

In Dhofar, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman is waging a heroic struggle against the combined forces of British imperialism, the Omani ruling class, and over 11,000 Iranian troops sent over by the Shah to 'eliminate subversion' in the strategic area of the Gulf. Until now the biggest political obstacle to this Iranian intervention in Dhofar has been the Egyptian and Jordanian regimes helped to set up the deal. This new

stage of Arab-Iranian collaboration most certainly opens up the possibility of a more vigorous prosecution of the war against the Dhofari revolution.

The most immediate consequence of these accords, however, is its short-term repercussions on the progress of the Kurdish revolution. The day following the Algiers conference, the Iranian regime completely sealed off its northern borders with Iraq, blocking the passage of all ammunition and medical supplies to the liberated territories of Kurdistan. At the same time, a massive Iraqi attack was launched against the besieged Kurdish militia (the Pesh Merga).

This pincer-like military operation of the Iraqi and Iranian armies has undoubtedly caused very heavy losses to the Kurdish forces, and cannot but call into question most of the major achievements of the Kurdish revolution during the last year of fighting. The situation in Northern Iraq, however, has not yet worked itself out fully.

*Red Weekly* will be presenting a more complete balance sheet of the Kurdish struggle in a future issue.

Saleh Jaafar

# — THEY CALL THIS — DEMOCRACY.....

And they call this a democracy. ey. Don't make me laugh. These are the words of Mr Sonny Leon, leader of the Labour Party in South Africa, who is currently experiencing the delights of the so-called 'detente' in the area.

The Labour Party is one of the two main parties represented on the Coloured Representative Council (CRC) of South Africa. This body was set up some five years ago as a concession by Vorster to the Coloured People (people of mixed race) - they were to have their own parliament.

It was, however, unique in being a par-

liament without a country - there is no 'homeland' for the Coloureds. Nor could it make any decisions concerning police, defence, industry, etc. In fact, it had less power than the white town councils.

But even this shell represented a threat to the South African regime. So they decided that only two-thirds of the total of 60 members would be elected, while the remaining 20 would be nominated by the Government. At the first elections this duly ensured a narrow majority for the pro-apartheid Federal Party - all 20 nominated members were of course from the Federal Party, having lost their seats (and in most cases their jobs) when the time came for new elections.

last month, however, it was predictable that the Labour Party would win a majority in spite of the system of nominations. And the policy of the Labour Party is to boycott the CRC and call for direct representation in the South African parliament.

So the Minister of Coloured Affairs, Dr Schalk van der Merwe, has now introduced a Bill enabling him to take over from the CRC. In other words, he has made a farce of a farce. But at least he has made clear at the same time that 'detente' is simply a cover for South Africa's determination to maintain its racist regime at all costs.

# BLACK THESE GRAPES

A STRUGGLE that started in the grape fields of southern California has opened a new front here. The United Farm Workers Union of America, which organises the oppressed agricultural workers, mostly Chicanos (Mexican-Americans), immigrants and other minority nationalities, is asking for help from the British labour movement.

Britain is the second biggest European importer of grapes picked by scab labour, and the UFW is appealing for these to be boycotted. Due to the success of the boycott campaign in the US, larger quantities are now on the British market. If sales here can be stopped, the UFW will be well on the way to victory.

The grapes are being picked by members of the Teamsters Union, which signed contracts in 1973 with the growers without having a single member in the fields. These contracts eliminated some of the major benefits won by the UFW, such as the Union-controlled hiring hall, health and safety precautions, and job security. When 98% of the farm workers walked out on strike, the Teamsters sent in hired thugs to intimidate and beat up their picket lines.

The racist police and courts ignored the violence of the scabs, but arrested UFW pickets under court injunctions - almost 10,000 arrests have been made to date. When two pickets were killed the UFW pulled its members out of the grape growing areas, and concentrated on a boycott campaign in the cities.

## TEAMSTERS' PLOY

Then last year the Teamsters offered to negotiate with the UFW if the boycott was called off, and seemed to be backing down on their attempt to oust the UFW. But this was simply a ploy to get the grapes on

the market. Elaine Elinson, European co-ordinator of the UFW, explained to *Red Weekly* that this was part of the reason why the grapes had got through to British shops. During a previous boycott campaign in 1969, the dockers at Tilbury refused to unload the scab grapes, but although the Transport and General Workers Union leadership has again expressed support for the UFW, it has used agreements with the employers as a reason for not ordering its members to refuse to unload the grapes. The T&G have promised, however, that next year there will be a total boycott.

and workers of minority nationalities have few rights, and have been kept down by the red-neck police and the grower-dominated courts. There is little hope of organising effective workers self-defence in such an area.

However in the cities the UFW has found an immense fund of support from the student movement, the labour movement, and amongst progressive people in the churches. And by taking their members into the cities they have helped to develop them as mass leaders and organisers. The most successful boycott campaign, in Boston, was organised by a young member who could neither read or write.

## PACIFISM

Whatever the effectiveness of the present non-violent tactics of the UFW, it is difficult to see the pacifism of its leader, Cesar Chavez, winning out in the long struggle against the US multi-million dollar agricultural business. The latter is essential if the Union is to organise all of the 2.6 million US farm workers. But at the moment the lack of support from other trade unionists is encouraging desperate tactics like asking the immigration authorities to act against illegal immigrants being employed by the growers, which can only divide farm workers.

However the main problem in Britain now is to support the boycott. All US grapes sold here are picked by scab labour. They are called 'Red Emperor', and are large, oval in shape and dark red in colour.

Cesar Chavez has said: 'Europe is the key - if you boycott scab grapes this Spring and Summer, we will have contracts in the Fall'. 'Raise the question in your trade union branch and student union, and drive the scab grapes off the market. For further information contact *Red Weekly*.

## Bob Purdie

Despite the seeming inaction of the bureaucracy, Elaine stresses the gratitude of the UFW for the help and solidarity of the T&G, but admits that her Union is at present in a serious position. Their meagre strike fund and the 1.5 million dollars gifted by the AFL/CIO trade union federation have almost gone. In 1970, the Union had 80 contracts with the growers, covering 40,000 workers, but now they are down to ten contracts and many of their members have been forced to go to work in Teamster-controlled fields.

## BOYCOTT TACTIC

She defends the tactic of the boycott, rather than confronting the Teamsters in the fields. Southern California is in many ways similar to the US deep south - immigrant workers

# \*\*\*\*\* What's On? \*\*\*\*\*

**BIRMINGHAM RALLY** - 'Against the Common Market, For a United Socialist States of Europe!' Speakers include Ernest Mandel. Thursday 1 May at 7.30pm in Digbeth Civic Hall Assembly Halls. Organised by Birmingham IMG.

**'THE STATE, the Law and Ireland'**: new pamphlet by Steve Cohen produced for Manchester NCCL - available price 20p (plus 5p p&p) from Red Books, 97 Caledonian Road, London N.1.

**BENGALI FRIENDS** in Europe and elsewhere, for Bengali books and 'Grani-Del-Biplab' (Fourth International paper) contact: Bengali, c/o Internationalen, Box 3274, 10365 Stockholm, Sweden.

**SHEFFIELD RED CIRCLES**: Every Wednesday at 7.30pm in the Lion Hotel (corner of the Wicker and Nursery St).

**IMG GAY GROUP**: contact J. Mills, 153 Woodhouse Lane, Leeds.

**FOR CHEAP**, reliable IBM Typesetting with fast turn-around phone Carl or Martin on 01-837 9987.

**MR OLIGARCHY** says don't miss 'Muggins no longer - Socialism or barbarism'. A play - a weapon. Confront the gorillas and smash cultural oppression. Unity Theatre, 4/5/6 April at 7.45 pm. 50p. Then looking for bookings at 734 9083.

**WANTED** by Up Against the Law: names and numbers of policemen involved in prosecutions over Red Lion Square. Call, write or ring UPAL at 65 York Way, London, N.1. (01-837 4194).

**'IRELAND - THE ACID TEST'**: Stirling Marxist Discussion Group meeting, Tues 8 April at 7.30pm in the Cowans Centre, Cowans Street.

**DEFEND THE 14**: Public meeting in defence of the 14 pacifists charged with conspiracy to contravene the Incitement to Disaffection Act. Speakers include: Joan (Maynard) MP, Maureen Colquhoun MP, Ernie Roberts (Asst. Gen. Sec. AUEW), Bill Hetherington (defendant). Saturday 3 May at 2 pm in NUFTO Hall, Jockey's Fields, Holborn, WC1.

**100 MEN WANTED** for organising and running crèche for women's liberation conference in Manchester, 4/5/6 April 1975. Please contact John at 061-794 1389.

## Manifesto Eleitoral

da



L.C.I.

LIGA

COMUNISTA

INTERNACIONALISTA

ORGANIZADO POR O INTERNACIONALISTA

In the forthcoming Portuguese elections, the International Communist League, Portuguese sympathising organisation of the Fourth International, will be presenting more than 100 candidates on an anti-capitalist programme.

But the LCI is a very small organisation, with very big responsibilities in the context of Portugal today. It needs every form of assistance it can get. *Red Weekly* is therefore opening a public subscription to raise funds for the LCI's election campaign.

All donations should be sent to: LCI, c/o *Red Weekly*, 182 Pentonville Road, London N.1. (cheques payable to *Red Weekly*).

# Portugal - workers

IN THE WAKE of the failed coup in Portugal, the newly-formed Revolutionary Council nationalised the banks and insurance companies. In any capitalist country, such a move would put immense economic resources into the hands of the state, but this is even more so in Portugal, where the banks and insurance companies are at the centre of vast financial empires which have their fingers in every branch of the economy.

What is particularly important about this nationalisation, however, is not simply *what* was involved - after all, the capitalist state has taken over a big slice of the economy elsewhere without fundamentally altering its capitalist character - but *how* the nationalisations came about, and their effect on the working class.

Various political groups in Portugal have had written into their programmes proposals for taking over the banks and other sections of capital to tackle the domination of the economy by a handful of big monopolies. Among the most important of these was the Portuguese Communist Party. Yet despite the CP's presence in the Government and its great influence inside the mass movement no progress was made towards nationalisation of the financial institutions. Indeed, just a few weeks before the attempted coup the Government produced its 'emergency economic plan' which made no mention of nationalisation, basing itself instead on the sort of typical 'austerity' measures that European Governments have been using to make the working class bear the burdens of the crisis.

## WORKERS

However the attempted coup brought a new factor to bear in the



Bank workers organise mass picket outside their bank to keep it closed and make sure the bosses remain outside. It was action like this which exposed the sabotage of the big bankers and forced the Government to nationalise the banks.

situation - the bank workers themselves. In Portugal the bank workers have a relatively long history of independent and militant trade unionism, dating back even before 25

April. In the northern city of Porto, the Communist Party lost the elections for the union executive late last year to left-wing forces because of the PCP's strike-breaking policies just after the coup.

Among those defeated was the Communist Party president of the union, Avelino Goncalves, who had been Minister

of Labour in the first Provisional Government.

It is not surprising, then, that the bank workers should have been among the first to respond to the coup. All across the country, as soon as they heard the news of the coup, bank workers walked off their jobs and shut down the banks, posting mass pickets to make sure they stayed shut and to keep out the management. This move was taken in order to stop capitalists from withdrawing their money and causing an economic panic.

But even after the immediate threat of the coup had passed, the workers realised that the danger of economic sabotage was still very much present, and so refused to permit the banks to reopen as long as they remained in the hands of private capitalists. A joint statement issued by the three bank workers' unions of Lisbon, Coimbra and Porto argued: 'The need to adapt the present structure of the banking firms appears to be a logical consequence of the new conquests in the political situation. This change, taking into account that the accumulated wealth is the fruit of the unbridled exploitation of the working class and that small savings must be safeguarded, is necessarily complex. On the other hand the new political situation demands immediate measures against the monopolies and big landowners, placing the economy in the service of the Portuguese people. As it is still not possible to realise all that we consider necessary to reach these objectives, it would be premature to immediately open the banks.'

## NATIONALISATION

The following day the newly-formed 'Revolutionary Council' announced the nationalisation of the banks (to be followed shortly by the finance companies). At the moment both the banks and insurance companies are being run by workers' committees, although this arrangement is seen as only 'temporary' and the permanent structures for the running of these nationalised operations have yet to be worked out.

The nationalisation decision had an immediate impact on other groups of Portuguese workers, who followed the example of the bank workers and took matters into their own hands.

The workers at the CUF hospital (CUF is one of the biggest industrial monopoly groups in the country) decided that since the shares of the

hospital were owned by a nationalised insurance company, the hospital was automatically nationalised as well. They met in general assembly and decided to dissolve the existing management of the hospital and replace it with their own management committee, made up of representatives from the ancillary workers, technicians, administrators, nurses and doctors, along with the two chief administrators of the hospital, whom the workers 'ratified in their functions'. It was decided that this body would represent the workers in contacts with all outside bodies, and that it would operate as the executive body of the general assembly.

## TRANSPORT

The railway workers issued a public statement addressed to the workers of the country, warning them that the management of the railways is still dominated by people who held high posts under the old regime, and that the railway system is in a chaotic state. They demanded the immediate nationalisation of the railways, but pointed out that this was not sufficient: 'It is necessary that a national plan which coordinates the railways with the other types of transport is put into effect...the isolated nationalisation of Portuguese Rail will not produce the results we are seeking, which can only be translated into practice through the nationalisation of the national transport system.' Since this statement the rail unions have announced that they are going to carry out a purge of top administrative and technical personnel 'to eliminate inefficiency, boycotts and sabotage by structures and persons'.

Meanwhile workers at one Lisbon bakery decided to impose 'control by the workers of production, accounting and distribution' in order to prevent economic sabotage by their boss. They accused the management of 'distributing dividends which clearly exceed the wealth of the firm, excessive purchase of raw materials little of which has been used in the final product, granting of credits for periods clearly longer than those in current commercial practice, granting of excessive and irrational discounts in the sale of products, and other irregularities...' They claimed that these actions were rapidly bringing the company towards a declaration of bankruptcy which 'we consider fraudulent...'

A general assembly of workers demanded that the management implement the following measures within seven days: accept the right of the trade union council of the factory to scrutinise the accounts, and the right of any worker to have access to them through the council; immediate freezing of all salaries above £35 a week; immediate suspension of all dividend payments to shareholders, until such time as representatives of the workers and management have worked out a 'just form for the remuneration of capital'; cancellation of excessive sales discounts, and the elaboration of a scheme of sales credits with a maximum period of payment of 60-90 days.

If the company refuses to meet these demands within the stipulated time the workers are demanding that the Government steps in, and have said that they will take over the management until this intervention is carried out.

Undoubtedly moves such as these will multiply over the coming months and weeks as the workers take advantage of their victory to meet the challenges of the mounting economic crisis and the bosses' sabotage. It is out of these actions by the workers themselves that the prospect for socialism in Portugal will grow.



An off-duty soldier serves his stint at the seaside resort of Cascais, just out of the luxurious premises of what is a favourite hangout of the rich. In the Cascais residents' council, which has a fully-equipped free nursery for children. After threatening telephone calls from the local garrison and soldiers from the local garrison in their off-duty hours.



## FOR AN ECONOMY WHICH SERVES THE WORKERS

On 15 March thousands of Portuguese workers responded to the call of the Textile Workers Union and demonstrated in the streets of Lisbon under the slogans 'No to unemployment' and 'For an economy in the service of the

workers'.

The following excerpt from the statement issued by the Textile Workers Union explains what the Portuguese working class understands by this latter slogan:

... Considering that the present capitalist crisis is the exclusive responsibility of the bosses, and that its resolution must be paid for by the capitalists and not the workers.

The wool, textile and clothing workers understand that the solution of their most immediate problems and the need to 'struggle for a society with our classes require that financial credit should only be granted to:

1. enterprises which have been nationalised under workers' control;
2. agricultural workers' cooperatives;
3. the sectors of the economy devoted to meeting the basic needs of the workers: food, clothing and fuel; housing designed for working people; popular hospitals; and public works such as drainage, electrification and urban development.

Moreover we demand: the repeal of all anti-working class laws like the strike law; the prohibition of sackings without just cause; a maximum work week of 40 hours.

And we declare that the measures which the Revolutionary Council has taken and appears to be considering will only serve to resolve our problems as workers and contribute to putting us on the road to socialism if they are put into practice under the control of the workers and their organisations and within the perspective of building a society with neither exploiters nor exploited.

The Economist's editorial in its 22 March issue blew the guff on the Portuguese capitalists talking about the nationalisation of the economy. It observed: 'The political control of economic life...reaching effects. It will mean for independent democratic parties, independent new reactionaries' will find it hard to...funds to maintain their opposition to...'

This, undoubtedly unintended, socialist capitalist parties in Portugal are not creatures of a tiny handful of capitalists bloated with the wealth derived from exploitation underwritten by the fascist...up neatly the nature of the so-called 'moderates' in present day Portugal.

## UNDERWRITE

A glimpse into the way in which the workers underwrote the operations of every group has recently been provided by the Espirito Santo bank. Espirito Santo bank in Portugal, and its tentacles extend to every branch of the economy. But - nationalisation - it remained the personal fief of the Santo family, whose various and numerous branches were both controlled and staffed by the Santo family.

For months now the workers at the Santo - through their elected workers' committees - have been systematically investigating

# rs on the march



The new 'people's nursery' in the Lisbon. The nursery is situated in the Sporting Club of Cascais, which the club was occupied by the workers in the process of turning it into a nursery for children. The children were received by the occupants and had to stand guard on the nursery.

**RIGHT-WING US SENATOR** James Buckley has publicly proclaimed that Portugal represents the greatest current danger to 'world peace' and that military intervention by NATO may be necessary to sort things out in that country for world capitalism.

Buckley's dramatic pronouncement represents a growing awareness on the part of the ruling class of the imperialist world that they have a lot to lose if the struggle of the Portuguese working people continues to go forward. In this country the Foreign Editor of the *Daily Express* has already gone on record as favouring an economic blockade of Portugal, and the current issue of the right-wing Tory magazine *The Spectator*, goes even further.

In an editorial entitled 'Portugal, Spain and the danger in the Mediterranean', *The Spectator*, making no bones about its sympathy for fascism in both countries, advises that '... events in both countries now demand that we look at Iberia as a whole, and consider the very real threat to Western interests and to the stability of the peninsula which is posed both by the defeat of General Spínola's uprising, and by continued uncertainty in Spain about what will follow General Franco. . . There is, alas, a real danger that Portugal will, as so often before, become a running sore in her neighbour's side; that the virulent infection which has seized her since the overthrow of Senhor Caetano will communicate itself to Spain.'

### CUBAN SOLUTION

After comparing Portugal with Cuba, *The Spectator* urges a 'Cuban solution': 'It behoves the Western powers to ensure that Portugal is insulated as far as possible from Russian influence; and it may even be necessary, before the year is out, to warn the Russians off what is essentially an American, and a NATO, sphere of influence; even to the extent of imposing a blockade on Portugal.'

But it is not just the extreme wing of ruling class opinion that is worried. The 22 March issue of Britain's leading mouthpiece of big business, *The Economist*, shares the sense of danger of its right-wing colleagues.

This is particularly significant, because over the past few months *The Economist* has generally had an 'optimistic' outlook, putting its faith in the 'reasonableness' of the leaders of the Armed Forces Movement and the influence of pro-imperialist politicians like Socialist Party leader Mario Soares.

But this 'hopeful' vision has been shattered by the onward march

of the Portuguese working class, and so the sweet words of *The Economist* have turned to bitter diatribe. In their editorial on 22 March they warn that 'Portugal has crossed the watershed between last year's release from a right-wing dictatorship and this year's prospect of a left-wing one. . . The effects of what has happened are already being felt by the Portuguese themselves. . . They may soon also be felt by the rest of western Europe before long.'

Nevertheless, *The Economist*

sees a glimmer of hope: 'There are still democrats in many parties, and in the AFM itself, who will continue to fight back against the pressures on them. . . the foreign press is a kind of psychological lifeline for many Portuguese. . . The democrats of western Europe have a powerful interest of their own in showing that they have not forgotten Portugal.'

anti-Communist voters to score out the names of Communist candidates on their voting papers - which means they will spoil their ballots.'

'The Communist party has issued a directive to its supporters to vote early and then hold demonstrations outside the polling stations; that will deter other people from voting later in the day.'

'The only domestic political news published by the dailies is about the activities of the Communists, the extreme left and, sometimes, the Socialists.'

The first piece of nonsense ignores the fact that the main job facing the officers in the Armed Forces Movement's rural 'clarification' programmes is to break the decades-old political influence of reactionary village priests and local political bosses, who could easily deal with the sort of cheap political trickery that *The Economist's* 'correspondent' tries to ascribe to the military. The second 'revelation' is equally absurd: even the lowest estimates of the Communist Party's electoral support show that it will receive many more times the number of votes than it has organised 'supporters' whom it can 'direct' to engage in such stunts. The third claim is simply a good old-fashioned lie - as the briefest glance at any Portuguese daily paper will show.

The red-baiting campaigns of imperialism's hacks have never been renowned for either subtlety or accuracy, but when a prominent capitalist magazine like *The Economist* starts flinging around this sort of shit from the bottom of the barrel, then you know the ruling class is in trouble!

For once all the international agencies of capitalism - military ones like NATO as well as economic ones like the International Monetary Fund and the EEC - will have no trouble in uniting to try and smash the growing power of the Iberian working class.

In this situation the international workers' movement has a clear-cut responsibility to rally to the side of our Iberian comrades and defend with every power at our disposal, their right to make a socialist revolution. This responsibility is one we will be called on to meet in the very near future.

CHRIS BALFOUR

## What the papers say

The material out of which 'the democrats of western Europe' will weave this lifeline is demonstrated further on in the same issue. An article by *The Economist's* 'Portugal Correspondent' seeks to unmask the 'communist menace' by marrying some of the more absurd pieces of gossip picked up from the Lisbon market place with straight forward lies:

'Groups of officers touring the country to "educate" the electorate are reported to have been advising



House occupied by militants of the LCI, Portuguese sympathisers of the Fourth International, as soon as the attempted coup was launched to provide them with a base of operation. They also took over a printshop and persuaded the workers to help them produce more than 60,000 leaflets.

## THE REAL WRECKERS UNMASKED

issue really when. banks, it will have far that the ers and "so- cands on new regime." on that the but the nities, sides of ex- me, sums ocrats" and capitalists, banks, ist political orkers of the largest into almost a national- Espirito members nistration. co Espirito mittedes- pects of

the bank's operations, under the very noses of their bosses. The results of these investigations have been gathered into a comprehensive and damning indictment of the big capitalists' involvement in a network of fraud, reactionary political patronage, and economic sabotage.

### PPD

One thing which the workers' committees uncovered was a vast and complex network of overdrafts and loans through which the Espirito Santo family had used bank funds to underwrite the activity of every significant capitalist party that has appeared in Portugal since the downfall of the old regime. Hundreds of thousands of pounds have been doled out to groups ranging from the so-called 'Progressive Party' (a positive viper's nest of former fascists directly implicated in the reactionary mobilisation of the 'silent majority' last September) through to the Popular Democratic Party (PPD).

The case of this latter party is particularly important, because the PPD is a member of the Government and has spent the past year trying to tart itself up with a 'socialist' image for the benefit of the voters. It officially describes itself as 'social democratic' and has applied for membership of the Socialist International. But the bank workers' investigations have uncovered clear evidence that this party had more than £100,000 placed at its disposal by the

same hands that were feeding every right wing and fascist grouping on the scene.

These revelations certainly vindicate the good class instincts of those militants who have been demonstrating against the meetings of the PPD, such as those who suffered one death and many wounded at the hands of the police in the town of Setubal earlier this month.

The workers' enquiries have also uncovered even more damaging dirt about the operations of the bankers over the past year. It turns out that all members of the Espirito Santo family, as soon as the April coup had ousted the old regime, armed themselves with extensive overdraft facilities. Twenty one members of the family took out overdrafts totalling about £4 million - which they promptly exceeded - just in case the Portuguese working class should decide to reappropriate the blood and sweat that the Espirito Santo family and their bank had drained from them under the fascist regime.

But the Espirito Santos were not prepared to pull out with a small slice of their ill-gotten gains until they had put up a hard fight to hold on to the lot. Their massive subsidies to the capitalist parties was one prong of their strategy, but a second (following the example of their class in Chile) was massive economic sabotage designed to create the sort of anarchy which would fuel the political demagoguery of the far right.

Faced with serious economic problems and rising unemployment after April, the Government tried to pump £700 million into the economy through the banking system. The Espirito Santos promptly grabbed their share - and poured it down every available hog hole.

Records examined by the workers show that the Espirito Santos used the money to increase the total capital of a number of their subsidiary companies, but without attempting to raise production or increase employment. One firm continued to sack workers while its capital shot up four-fold in less than a year! Undoubtedly the Espirito Santos would have done even more damage had not the workers at one of these factories - the Central Beer Company, one of Portugal's leading breweries - caught on and occupied the plant, demanding immediate nationalisation of the firm.

This goes to show who are the real wreckers and sowers of anarchy in Portugal - the capitalist class. It also demonstrates the tremendous power that the workers' movement could wield if it used the information it has got from opening the books to establish workers' control over the economy.

Workers' control in the banking and financial system is a massive gain for the workers - one which could lay the foundation for a planned socialist economy, once the working class has forged its own organs of political power to coordinate and direct such a system.

# Back to back street abortions?

ON 7 FEBRUARY a Bill to amend the 1967 Abortion Act, proposed by James White (Labour MP, Glasgow Pollok) was given a second reading in the House of Commons by 200 votes to 88—with the Labour Party split down the middle.

The press has in general waxed enthusiastic about White's Bill, suggesting that its purpose is simply to 'do away with the abuses of the present Act'. And many people who support the right to abortion, including numerous doctors, do not see the Abortion (Amendment) Bill as a real threat. Yet the stark reality is that if the Bill were to become law, more than 60,000 women each year would be driven to back-street abortions.

And it is not impossible that the Bill could become law before very long. It has now been referred for investigation to a Select Committee of the House whose composition—only five of its fifteen members are known to be pro-abortion—suggests that the Bill may emerge relatively unchanged from this process.

A brief run-down of the Bill's clauses demonstrates only too well what would be the consequences of the woman or her family if the pregnancy continued would have to be shown before she could have an abortion.

## BASIS CHANGED

1. The Abortion (Amendment) Bill would change the whole basis for evaluating the grounds for abortion. At the moment, abortion is allowed under the National Health Service where it can be proved that the risks of continued pregnancy—to the woman's physical and mental health, and the health of her family—would be greater than if it was terminated.

Since figures proving that abortion in at least the first 12 weeks is safer than childbirth are widely accepted, many doctors have so far been willing to interpret the law in a relatively liberal manner. But under White's Bill an absolute 'grave and serious' risk to the physical and mental health

2. Furthermore, the onus would be on any doctor or assistant, challenged about why an abortion had been performed, to prove—at law, if necessary—that such a 'grave and serious' risk existed. In other words, that well-established precept in British legal traditions—'innocent until proved guilty'—would go out the window.

## TIME LIMIT

3. It is not only the grounds which are restricted, however. If passed, White's Bill would reduce the legal time limit for abortion from the present 28 weeks to 20 weeks. Just as a little twist in International Women's Year, a near 20-week residence requirement is also proposed.

Together, these two restrictions would mean that women from other countries would be excluded from the limited right to abortion gained so far in Britain. The amendment doesn't say that foreign women would not be allowed abortions—just that no foreign women who conceived anywhere other than Britain could be legally aborted in Britain. At a time when the authorities are clamping down on the right to abortions elsewhere—notably in Germany and Italy—the consequences of this measure are obvious.

4. Only doctors who have been in practice for five years would be qualified to approve abortions—thus excluding young doctors, who generally tend to be more sympathetic. In addition, the two signatures required could no longer be provided by doctors working in the same practice.

What these clauses so far boil down to is that any woman who is a British resident would have to, within 20 weeks, (i) find out that she was pregnant, (ii) decide what she wanted to do about it, (iii) find a doctor with more than five years' experience, (iv) convince him (most likely) that she should have an abortion, (v) find another doctor (not in the same practice) who also agrees, and (vi) have the abortion—if she was not by this time past the 20-week limit, and provided the hospital facilities were available in the light of the cuts in the NHS and the reactionary work-to-rule by many consultants who are refusing to carry out abortions.

## ADVICE RESTRICTED

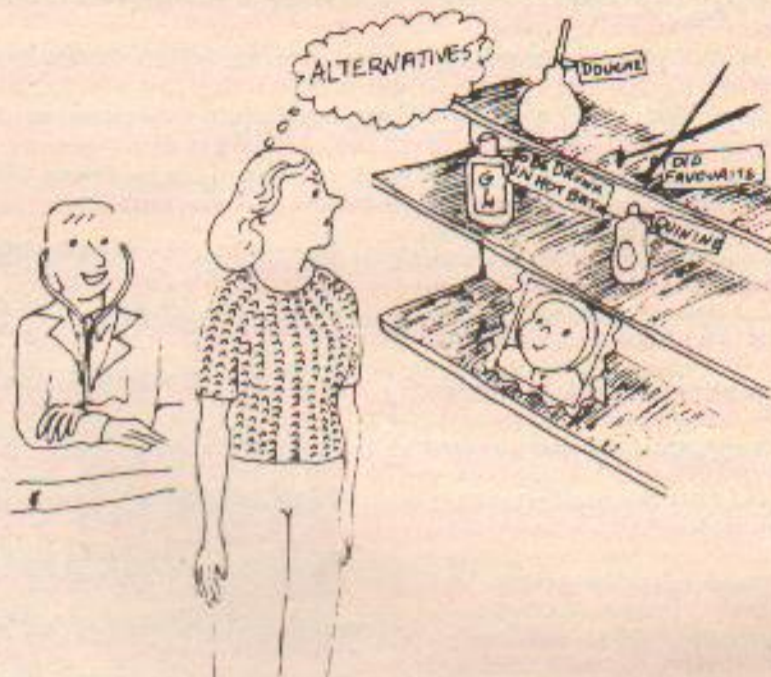
5. Another serious restriction is that no advice about abortion could be given to girls under 16 unless their parents were present. Doctors, social workers, and even women's groups, could be open to prosecution if they gave informal advice without the presence of the parents.

6. There would also be a general tightening up so that only registered doctors and 'people approved by the Secretary of State' (whoever they might be!) would be allowed to give

out advice—and only if they were unpaid. This means that potentially any Citizens Advice Bureau staff, Release workers or even paid workers for women's groups would be liable to prosecution simply for advising

women to see their family doctor about abortion information.

7. A final danger is the enforced secrecy clause. This would make it illegal to publish the name or any information that could lead to the



## INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY



INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY poster — available from Socialist Woman, 97 Caledonian Road, London N.1., price 20p (inc p&sp)

identification of a woman having an abortion or even simply seeking advice. This would also apply to anyone who gave evidence in court cases which might arise out of the new Bill.

It is only possible to guess why this clause has been included. Certainly it would rule out forms of protest such as that adopted with great effect by 100 women in France, who said 'I have had an abortion too' to protest against one woman's prosecution. It would also prevent any woman or group with experience or advice on the question of abortion to write articles for newspapers and journals.

## RIGHT-WING FORCES

It is no accident that these restrictions are being proposed at the present time. The attack on abortion is simply part of a general attempt by right-wing forces to push back the tide of social and sexual liberalism which grew up in the late 1960s.

For right-wingers like Mary Whitehouse and Keith Joseph, part of the solution to the present economic, political and social crisis lies in encouraging a return to 'good old-fashioned morals'. A return to the 'family' is held up as the key to a smoothly-running society.

Thus it is no surprise that a campaign to restrict women's rights to abortion is a major element in their offensive. More than anything else it is women's function as child-bearers which keeps them tied to the home and oppressed within the family structure. Control of child birth is essential if women are to be free to play a full role in society.

## CAMPAIGN

It is essential, therefore, to mobilise locally and nationally to present a public challenge to these rightist forces, and unite the widest possible support for the right to abortion against restrictive legislation, making it clear that what is needed is an extension of the provisions of the 1967 Act, not its restriction.

Only last week the Women's TUC came out for free abortion on demand. The vast majority of the women Labour MPs are opposed to the Bill. A National Abortion Campaign has also been set up with representatives from various women's groups, pro-abortion groups, and political organisations.

The need for a massive campaign to fight this restrictive legislation is urgent, and the potential for it clearly exists. Information on all aspects of the Campaign's work can be obtained from 80 Railton Road, London SW24 (01-274 8498).

Dodie Wepler and Linda Smith

The information in this article about the Abortion (Amendment) Bill is taken from an excellent pamphlet produced by A Woman's Right to Choose and available from 186 Kings Cross Road, London WC1X 9DE.

## CHILD-CARE - WHOSE BABY?



Women student militants in Sheffield, backed by the trades council Working Women's Charter sub-committee, demand better local nursery facilities.

INTERNATIONAL Women's Year has been heralded as the occasion for a great leap forward in the position of women. The Labour Party, in particular, claims to champion their cause.

Yet it is a Labour MP, James White, who has been leading the campaign to restrict abortion. On equal pay Labour's much-touted legislation is full of loopholes. And on the provision of nurseries its record and proposals are an absolute scandal.

Although the provision of nurseries is a precondition for any real equality in pay, opportunity, and education/training, the just-published Anti-Discrimination Bill has no proposals at all to make on this score. The Labour Government has also turned a blind eye to the campaign by students for nurseries to be provided at every college. In fact there are less nursery places today than there were in the 1930s!

But the Government cannot fall back on the excuse that it doesn't know the facts and figures. Its own survey shows that the number of women who go out to work,

as a proportion of all women, has risen from 1931 to 1971 by between 247% and 540% for different groups between the ages of 20 and 44. The absolute increase (because of the rise in the population) is much larger. And this does not allow for the large number of women who would return to work but for this problem.

However the Labour Government's general policy of continuing with the Tories' cuts in social expenditure has meant that it has refused to release the necessary resources to develop child-care provisions to match the increasing need.

Even in the one area where there has been some expansion—in nursery school places—this is by no means an unqualified gain. The few hours that children can spend there and the break for school holidays mean that they are next to useless for working mothers. Indeed, their main purpose is to give the children a level of literacy and discipline which prepares them for primary education.

This illustrates how the Government's social policy is geared not to the liberation of women—in this case, the freeing of women from sole and individual responsibility for child care—but to the needs of the capitalist order. While the State has been willing to take on certain aspects of women's function in the family in the interests of producing a literate and dis-

ciplined workforce, it is emphatically in favour of preserving the basic ties of women to children and the family.

Yet the liberation of women, for which the Labour Government claims to be so concerned, is merely an empty phrase if it does not mean that society takes on a collective responsibility for the upbringing of children. This does not mean the destruction of the relationship between mother and child, but that women should not be forced to take the sole responsibility for the child's welfare.

Whilst the Labour Government flinches shy of providing adequate nurseries for working women, a significant number of employers have taken the initiative to provide nurseries at their factories. Before welcoming these gentlemen to the fold of women's liberation, however, we should take a careful look at their reasons.

In the face of the economic crisis, the employers are looking for any method of increasing productivity. The guarantee of a flexible and passive workforce would be a real boon for them. And by offering nursery provisions, when there is a real shortage, they hope to attract and tie women to working for low wages on either a full-time or part-time basis.

These developments—the initiative of the employers, the policy of the Government—make it an urgent task to organise a campaign for nurseries which meet the needs of women (and children). Its central demand should be for an increase in nurseries financed by the State but under the control of the labour movement through the trade unions, tenants associations, student unions, etc.

Already headway has been made in some areas. In Sheffield, students as part of their activity in the NUS Women's Campaign have launched a general campaign on the lack of nursery facilities locally. Last month, with the backing of the Trades Council Working Women's Charter sub-committee, they held a 'baby demo', both to demand adequate facilities from the council and to draw in more support for the campaign.

Their lead can be followed in other areas and extended. For example, trade unionists in a particular factory and tenants from a nearby housing estate can join together to demand that the council provides a nursery in the vicinity which meets their mutual needs. It is only by organising such a campaign on nurseries that we can guarantee that 1975 really does mark a step forward for women.

Ann Foreman



# The Communist Party's phoney class war

LAST MONTH THE LIAISON COMMITTEE FOR THE DEFENCE OF Trade Unions held its first conference since the Labour Government was elected. At a time when the working class is facing attacks on its living standards and rising unemployment, the events at this meeting are an opportunity to make an assessment of the industrial aims and tactics of the Communist Party, which has controlled the LCDTU since it was formed in 1966.

Only 300 delegates attended this latest meeting of the LCDTU, and only eight of these were women workers. Yet in February 1969, the LCDTU pulled off a strike of 150,000 against Labour's *In Place of Strife* Bill, and later one of 250,000. In 1970, the LCDTU was once again responsible for the huge unofficial strike on 8 December against the Tories' Industrial Relations Act. In 1972, it was LCDTU spade-work that played an important part in building the massive wave of unofficial strike action to force the release of the five dockers from Pentonville Prison. So what went wrong?

Since those days we haven't seen action on such a scale, inspired independently of the official trade union leaders, because the CP have chosen to cut the cloth of the LCDTU to the measurements demanded by the 'left' trade union leaders like Hugh Scanlon and Jack Jones. Divorced from any independent mass actions, attendances at the LCDTU have slumped.

## ACTION

It's not that the Communist Party or the LCDTU have a fetish against 'unofficial' action. While everyone, the IMG included, would prefer official action anytime, the CP, through the LCDTU, have in their time organised massive actions independent of the union chiefs.

When Bernard Panter, a leading CP figure in the AUEW in Manchester, said at last week's LCDTU in reply to the cat-calls from the delegates of the International Socialists: 'It's not a question of official or unofficial action. It's a question of action' - he was quite in line with the policies of the Communist Party. To see it all in simple terms of 'official' versus 'unofficial' action with the Stalinists always firmly in the camp of the first is to misunderstand the real reasons why the politics of the CP betray the struggle over key issues such as Shrewsbury.

At the root of things is the political strategy of the Communist Party. For the CP, socialism will be achieved by the successful struggle for 'democracy' inside all the organisations the ruling class uses to maintain capitalism and stay in power - what Marxists call the bourgeois state.

To put it in the words of Bert Ramelson, Industrial Organiser of the CP: 'As far as I am concerned, a working-class Commissioner of Police sitting in New Scotland Yard is a smashing of the bourgeois state.' For the CP, it will be possible to overthrow capitalism by getting the right faces into Parliament and into Whitehall. The first major obstacle will be breached when a 'left' Government is elected based on a Parliamentary majority of 'left' and CP MPs and receiving mass support. Only then, according to the CP, can the real work of organising socialism begin.

Looking at the present composition of the Labour Party, it's not hard to see why the CP believe such a prospect is a long way off. For the time being the purpose of all political work, whether it's mass action in the factories and streets ('official' or 'unofficial') or trade union or local and Parliamentary elections, is to increase the number of 'left' MPs and trade union leaders who support the CP's broad policy at each point in time.

## UNITY

When it comes to working out how the greatest possible unity and support of the working class can be won in the fight over a political issue in the trade unions, such as the freeing of the Shrewsbury pickets, the conclusion is simple. Since Parliament, the Government and the TUC are where the 'real' power lies for taking the first steps towards socialism, the movement must go step-by-step to get ever-widening support in Parliament and the TUC from the 'lefts'. When enough of these people have been won on an issue, then the 'right wing' in the Cabinet and the TUC will see that resistance will cost them too dear and concede the demands of

as Sid Easton (TGWU Region 1, CP and ex-bodyguard of Harry Pollitt) said to the LCDTU last week: 'They have their problems and work amongst very different kinds of people than we do.' In other words, while the entire trade union bureaucracy is so united in support of the social contract, Scanlon and the rest of the 'left' don't want to get out on a limb by themselves.

But there's also a deeper reason why the CP are left holding the baby by the erstwhile 'lefties', Scanlon and Jones owe their present positions to their espousal of 'shop floor

Then, these 'lefts' will need an alternative to the policies of Labour which can be implemented as a comprehensive answer to the crisis. Such an alternative programme could not wait for the long struggle to people Parliament and the TUC with nice 'lefts'. It would depend on the strength and organisation of the working class in their own organisations. It would lead to a direct confrontation with the state. It would threaten the very interests Scanlon and Scargill have in keeping the mass movement within strict limits. No longer could they 'balance' between the Government and their members.

er than Pentonville - and it would have meant flying in the face of the precious 'left' trade union leaders with independent actions they would have been forced to back before they were ready.

## PARLIAMENTARY ROAD

The vast majority of the relatively tiny number of delegates at the LCDTU clearly did believe in the parliamentary road to socialism. They may have worries about the 'low profile' of the LCDTU as it languishes without the close cooperation of Scanlon and Jones, but, on the whole, the delegates backed

Last month's conference of the LCDTU. The first since the election of the Labour Government, it was also the worst attended for more than 5 years. Inset: Bernard Panter, leading CP militant in Manchester engineering.



Photo: CHRIS DAVIES (Report)

## Why the Liaison Committee is on its death bed

power' in the late '50s and early '60s. When the big struggles against *In Place of Strife* and the Industrial Relations Act came along they couldn't afford to ignore the militants who had put them at the top of the pile in the Transport and Engineering Unions. Even so, it was Jones who tested the wrath of his own dockland militants when he eventually sold them out with the Jones-Aldington Agreement in 1972.

But time moves on. Eventually, both Jones and Scanlon became established and secure in their positions and could afford to be less sensitive to the demands of their own militants and the 'pressure' politics of the CP's industrial machine in the T&GWU and AUEW.

Not only has Jones in particular become 'independent' of his shop-floor militants, but the stakes in the class struggle are now higher than in the period 1969-74. When Government policies are being set by the need to help the ruling class shift the burden of the crisis onto the backs of the working class through inflation and unemployment, the 'lefts' in the TUC are very aware that mobilising their 'big battalions' leads inevitably to confrontation with a Labour Government. It's all very well for the 'lefts' to make Sunday speeches about the need to purge the Labour Government of the 'right wingers' (as Scargill did at a recent Yorkshire Miners' Council), but the mobilisation of the whole movement in the factories and localities is a different cup of tea altogether.

These are the real reasons behind the present problems of the CP. They've lost the guarantees of support from the trade union 'lefts'. On the Shrewsbury issue, therefore, there was a lot more 'hard graft' to be done before the CP could smell success. This is why they have sat so heavily on the campaign and taken it step-by-step through the laborious process of building up slow support amongst trade union officialdom and the 'left' Labour MPs - first UCATT and the T&GWU, then the campaign for a TUC-backed lobby of Parliament, and now the final push for TUC-sponsored strike action, even if only for one day.

This explains the argument of Stan Barlowe (UCATT, Birmingham) at the LCDTU last week that 'Shrewsbury was different from the Pentonville Five. Then the mass movement was ready. Over Shrewsbury it had to be carefully created...' What he meant was that the mass movement had to be slowly created on the CP's terms.

The arguments and tactics of the Communist Party are fine if you really believe socialism is achievable through Parliament. If you support the parliamentary road then, as a consequence, you have to also support the CP's near-destruction of the Shrewsbury campaign and the present demoralisation, particularly in the building trade unions, as a result of ineffective 'protest' action which has dragged on for over 18 months. Effective action could have been built and the pickets could now be out of jail. It would have taken long-

the Communist Party right down the line. The resolution they passed said 'they key need is united rank and file pressure to win the TUC and Labour Government to change course now.'

Only 17 delegates refused to vote for the resolution. Fourteen of those were trade unionists belonging to the IMG who abstained. A similar number of delegates from the International Socialists mistakenly decided to isolate themselves and walked out, to the delight of the CP, when the platform refused to send the whole of the collection to the Glasgow dustcart drivers.

The LCDTU stands in dire danger of being killed off by the politics of the CP. Militants can only save it by fighting for it to become a real campaigning organisation against the ruling class. But that fight now and in the future depends on the forces of the revolutionary left demonstrating an alternative and effective line to the pseudo-socialism of the Communist Party and their left-Labour supporters.

## Sam Boyd

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 \* Another article in the near future will discuss the perspective for working towards the emergency of a revolutionary current in the trade unions and an alternative to Stalinism and the politics of Labour \*  
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# Aberdeen - oil companies in the dock

'The oil industry is squeezing at traditional industries that it cannot adapt into service industries. This is not a disaster for workers while the oil boom continues. But the oil companies are operating Aberdeen simply as a part of their world strategies. Developments far away could bring the boom to a sudden end.'

ABERDEEN HARBOUR has been an important and busy one since it took the lead in the new trawling industry late last century. It is also the major importing port for the North East of Scotland.

So when the oil companies started their explorations in the North Sea, they naturally gravitated towards this well positioned harbour with its well developed services. The oil companies needed the harbour—but what's never mentioned is that *the harbour didn't need the oil companies!*

The sudden attention of very big business in the shape of the oil monopolies went straight to the heads of the local businessmen and Labour councillors. They dressed up the exploitation of offshore resources, made economically possible by the recent surge in world oil prices, as a great civic achievement—a matter for yet more pride and self-congratulation.

They treat the oil companies like honoured guests who should not be asked to pay, but might leave a tip if they were happy at the end of their stay. Meanwhile house prices tripled, rents soared and the social services became grossly overburdened.

## WORKERS ISOLATED

Aberdeen workers have been isolated geographically and historically and are much less numerous and organised than their brothers and sisters in Dundee and Glasgow. They have

long suffered very low pay, high unemployment and poor housing, leading as a result to steady emigration. So the oil companies were able to draw off skilled and unskilled workers from other industries by offering slightly higher rates while they imposed much longer hours, 'lump' contracting, low safety and dogged American boss-style opposition to unionisation.

To persuade workers to accept

organisation solely by their bosses while doing exhausting work in unsafe, unhealthy conditions isn't easy. It has meant a massive public relations job by the companies about 'Working as a team' and about the 'rough life for tough men, it isn't easy but it's worth it...'

As part of this operation, BP for instance produces 400,000 copies of a paper which is distributed to every household. They also seem to

have a vice-like grip over the two local dailies. But the fact that *Aberdeen People's Press*, a small fortnightly independent, sells 1400 copies indicates the thirst by some workers for a voice of their own.

## TRAWLERS OUSTED

The harbour, of course, was already busy with its traditional work. But the higher oil prices engineered by the companies in collusion with

the oil producers in the Middle East enabled them to outbid the trawler owners, who already had troubles of their own in the overfished North Sea.

Last year about 10 ships were laid up indefinitely in Aberdeen because of mounting losses. Fishing workers have been attracted by the higher pay to work the supply boats, leaving their unions behind them, and more trawler owners have transferred their unprofitable ships to oil rig stand-by service.

Many more boats—both trawlers and general cargo boats—are being re-directed to other ports on the coast by owners beaten by the infl-

## Report by Aberdeen IMG

ated port dues and congested conditions in Aberdeen harbour. Meanwhile Shell, Total Oil, Amoco and Texaco are building their own specialised facilities, and are taking over control of the Harbour Board from the Labour Council and assorted small fry. The storage and loading facilities, like the boats they use, are massive and extremely specialised—in other words, useless for anything but getting oil from the North Sea bed.

## WILL BOOM CONTINUE?

The oil industry is thus squeezing out traditional industries that it cannot adapt into service industries. This is not a disaster for workers while the oil boom continues. But will it continue?

Right now, visitors from the recession-hit outside world are struck by what a rich wee city Aberdeen is. Oil exploration is going ahead faster than ever before, anywhere. But the oil companies are operating Aberdeen simply as a part of their world strategies. Developments far away from here could bring the boom to a sudden end, despite the efforts of the eager-to-please city fathers.

In its issue of 8 March *The Economist* showed that there is in fact a world glut of oil—that (for instance) the oil companies are telling their tankers to move slowly across the oceans and so keep more oil effectively in store and less on the oversupplied market.

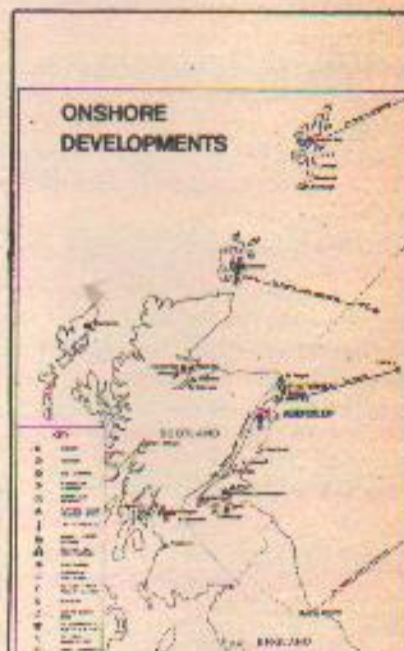
The article went on to point out that despite the illusions sustained by a massive world-wide public relations job, the price of oil could not go on defying the laws of the market for ever. Sooner or later it would collapse, possibly below the price that would enable North Sea oil to be sold at a profit. The implication was that this would freeze North Sea oil development in its tracks.

Clearly British capitalism's hopes of a way out of its slump and mounting debt via oil money—which underpins the entire economic strategy of the Labour Government—would then be destroyed. Expropriation under workers' control would be the only alternative for workers to massive long term unemployment in an area whose other industries had been allowed to run down. But how well prepared are workers for this huge task?

## STEWARDS COMMITTEE

The dockers in Aberdeen are a key sector in the industry. They are very well organised, with a healthy distrust of the T&GWU bureaucracy and a reliance on their own organisation under an active shop stewards committee.

But, although Aberdeen harbour has found itself with almost all its eggs in the oil basket, the oil comp-



This map shows the way in which various areas have been affected by the opening up of North Sea oil.

anies have not returned the touching faith which the city fathers have in them. They have instead distributed their service facilities in Lerwick, Peterhead, Montrose and Leith.

So when the dockers blacked supply ships in the fight for unionisation on the ships and rigs, the companies simply re-directed their ships to Peterhead and Montrose—formerly very small fishing ports, where the main force of the dockers are casual, lump workers. This cut the ground away from their blacking and brought the wrath of their employers down upon them with extra force—business had been taken away!

## REGIONAL ORGANISATION

The dockers are thus acutely aware of how their isolation is exploited by the massive, broadly distributed oil companies. It's very much in the interest of the oil companies to encourage duplication of services (and construction yards) even to the extent of over-capacity, by a host of uncoordinated firms wanting desperately to get into the boom and backed by small town councils with local horizons. Dockers can only actually use their strength against these oil companies by region-wide shop stewards organisations, with dockers and workers in the rest of the oil industry together with links with workers in other energy sectors (for instance the miners).

For at least a year now there has been an Oil Rigs Construction Shop Stewards' Liaison Committee, which joins up the rig construction yards in solidarity. Their struggle cannot be separated from that of the dockers. The organised sectors will have to extend their active links and use their united strength in the struggle to win the unionisation of all sectors and forge links with oil workers on the Scandinavian coast of the North Sea.

Only by such means can the organised workers demonstrate a solution credible to the supply ship workers, the rig workers, and the hordes of white collar workers crammed into the maze of offices around Aberdeen docks and elsewhere. Workers in the oil-related industry must make what gains they can now—in organisation, information, and centralisation—in order to turn the tide in their favour in the near future, and pose as a realistic target for the nationalisation of the industry under workers' control as part of a nationally co-ordinated workers' plan for energy production and use.

## Smuggled leaflet found in Chilean cargo

The following leaflet was discovered by Italian dockers unloading a cargo of fishmeal from a ship which had recently docked after a voyage from Chile. Another similar one has reportedly been found at the British port of Avonmouth. Their discovery should underline for all militants the importance of blacking all trade with the junta as an act of concrete support for the Chilean resistance.

## TO THE WORKERS OF THE WORLD

A message for you from the dockworkers of the Port of San Antonio, Chile.

### ORGANISED RESISTANCE

This 4 November (1974) is the fourth Salvador Allende, who was brutally assassinated by these hyenas in uniform.

anniversary of the Popular Government which was headed by our martyr-president Salvador Allende, who was brutally assassinated by these hyenas in uniform.

In Chile the Popular Government laid the foundations for a transformation of Chilean society by political means. The basic programme of the Government involved the recovery by nationalisation of our national wealth in raw materials—copper, iron and nitrates; the nationalisation of the banks which were in the hands of the Chilean oligarchy; the carrying through of a radical land-reform; and putting a stop to the monopolies—all of this in order to win some dignity for the dispossessed of our country.

Our native fascists, together with North American imperialism and the CIA, financed, planned and orchestrated an entire conspiracy to defeat and overthrow a Government which had been elected constitutionally by the People of Chile. In this way they hoped to prevent the advance of the Chilean revolution and do away with socialism.

Today the Resistance is growing faster than ever in the formation of the Anti-Fascist Front. It finds a thousand expressions—in slogans and paintings on walls, in leaflets, in the protests of the housewives as they go about their shopping, in the wage-demands of the workers, which squeeze from the bosses

higher percentage rises than the Fascist junta authorised.

### REPRESSION

Every night the working-class housing estates and shanty-towns are watched and patrolled. Some are totally cordoned off by armed soldiers who drag their inhabitants half-dressed from their houses, and cart them off to the concentration camp at Tejas Verdes, to interrogate and torture them. This is what the military call 'the battle against delinquency'.

Hundreds of the sons of this long-suffering port never came back to see their loved ones—or the military brought back just their clothes, or their bodies in a sealed coffin which the families were allowed to keep for half an hour in the house before taking it to the cemetery, with only two or three relatives permitted to accompany it. Widows are forbidden to wear mourning.

This 1 November 1974, Day of Remembrance, the church of our port was filled as it had never been filled before in the entire history of Catholic worship, with workers, young people, women and children who went there to honour the memory of those whom the junta criminals had murdered.

All honour and glory to those of our leaders who were put to death for the sole crime of defending the working standards of the dockworkers' union of the port of San Antonio. Their names are: 1. Guillermo Alvarez Casas, President; 2. Samuel Nunez Gonzalez, Treasurer; 3. Armando Jimenez Machuca, Leader.

4. Hector Rojo Alfaro, Leader of the National Federation and International Leader for the Federation which is affiliated to the International Transport Workers' Federation.

### INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY

We are profoundly grateful for every act of solidarity and support which is carried out on behalf of the people of Chile, to help us overthrow once and for all the fascist dictatorship which rules our country.

With your help and our own efforts we are absolutely sure that we will emerge victorious and defeat those who staged the coup.

### WE ASK

1. Don't move any cargo whatever, be it bound to or from Chile.
2. Don't load or unload a single ounce of copper.
3. Every Chilean ship should be blacked. Don't load arms for Chile. Refuse every kind of economic aid or support for the Chilean fascists.

LONG LIVE INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY

LONG LIVE LATIN-AMERICAN SOLIDARITY

WORKERS OF THE WORLD UNITE. THANKS TO THE WORKERS OF THE WORLD.

VENCEREMOS—WE WILL OVERCOME November 1974. San Antonio.

# Slippery slope to mass

Pre-empting Sir Don Ryder's forthcoming report, British Leyland have announced a package deal of redundancies, mainly in Birmingham. The worst hit plant is Austin-Morris at Longbridge, where management approached the shop stewards before Easter with a demand for 1,200 redundancies.

The response of the stewards at the Austin plant was simply to press for these redundancies to be 'voluntary'. A similar position has been taken by the shop stewards at the other BLMC plants affected — at the Rover, S.U. Carburettors and BLMC Tractors and Transmissions factories. Of course this has been accepted by the BLMC 'on condition that the volunteers are forthcoming'.

But as a woman shop steward at the Rover plant pointed out, allowing voluntary redundancies opens the door for compulsory redundancies. Yet Jack Dickens, secretary of the Austin works committee at Longbridge, has said that if the volunteers are not forthcoming, then the shop stewards will fight for the extension of the period allowed for volunteers to come forward!

However the danger pointed out by the Rover shop steward has already become reality. Encouraged by the acceptance of the principle of redundancy by the stewards, the BLMC management have now demanded another 1900 redundancies on top of the 1200 already called for — in total, 3100 jobs. Even the shop stewards now realise that in the present economic climate there is little likelihood



of this many volunteers for the dole-queue.

Having accepted voluntary redundancies, the logic of their position draws them towards accepting, however reluctantly, forced redundancies or short-time working on a mass scale.

Workers in the industry are now facing progressive retreats by their plant leaderships — not to fight these retreats will lead to more redundancies and short-time working. From here, the short slippery slope to mass sackings is inevitable.

This fight cannot be conducted on a factory by factory basis, but only on an industry-wide scale. Steps taken now to press for mass meetings of the shop-floor and for conferences of factory delegates from all the car-plants

in the country, would pay dividends for all workers in the industry. At these meetings, militants could begin to prepare car-workers for a fight against redundancies through demands for factory occupations to meet redundancies. Coupled with the demand that the Labour Government immediately nationalise the car-industry and place the industry under workers' control, this would form the basis for an effective struggle.

Similarly militants should reject completely the Ryder Report and demand that the trade unions conduct their own enquiry into the state of the industry.

John Graham (Birmingham AUEW)

## sackings

### LANGUAGE SCHOOL BOSSES MOVE ONTO ATTACK

## 'THROUGH TO THE END' at Crosfield's occupation

WORKERS have occupied Crosfield Electronics in North London in a bitter fight to save 300 jobs — a third of the workforce employed at the factory. The occupation began on Wednesday 26 March following the unanimous decision of a mass meeting.

Management has now been excluded from all buildings by the workers, who are mostly members of the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers, TASS (the staff section of the AUEW), and the National Union of Sheetmetal Workers and Coppersmiths.

It is widely believed that the 300 redundancies are part of a plan to close down the London factory completely and transfer all production to the parent factory, De La Rue in Peterborough. All the work from the wiring shop is being sent there.

Crosfield's only merged with De La Rue last August, and at the time all employees were sent written assurances that there would be no red-

undancies. The company's claim that the world slump in trade is to be blamed has been rejected by the Labour MP for North Islington, Michael O'Halloran. 'I think this is all part of a plan to make everybody in their London branch redundant and transfer all their work to Peterborough', he said.

An urgent task for the unions at Crosfield's will be contacting the workers at the Peterborough plant to get all transferred work blacked. Meanwhile the occupation is preventing any attempts to shift equipment out.

There has been a rash of smaller redundancies in North London recently, particularly in light engineering, and the Local District Committee of the AUEW — which has already made the action official — is considering making Crosfield's a test case. Support has already been forthcoming from several Labour MPs

who attended a Trades Council meeting at which the stewards' committee spoke.

As well as the redundancies, another 100 workers have been put on short-time. What is desperately needed is for the occupation to force the company both to re-employ those sacked and to institute work-sharing with no loss of pay amongst the whole workforce. John Spendiff, the assistant press officer to the occupation, told *Red Weekly*: 'We're going to see this thing through to the end'. Solidarity must be forthcoming to make sure that end is victory.

Messages of support and donations to: Joint Shop Stewards Fund, c/o Bill Hayward, 34 Dresden Road, London N.19.

### International Marxist Group



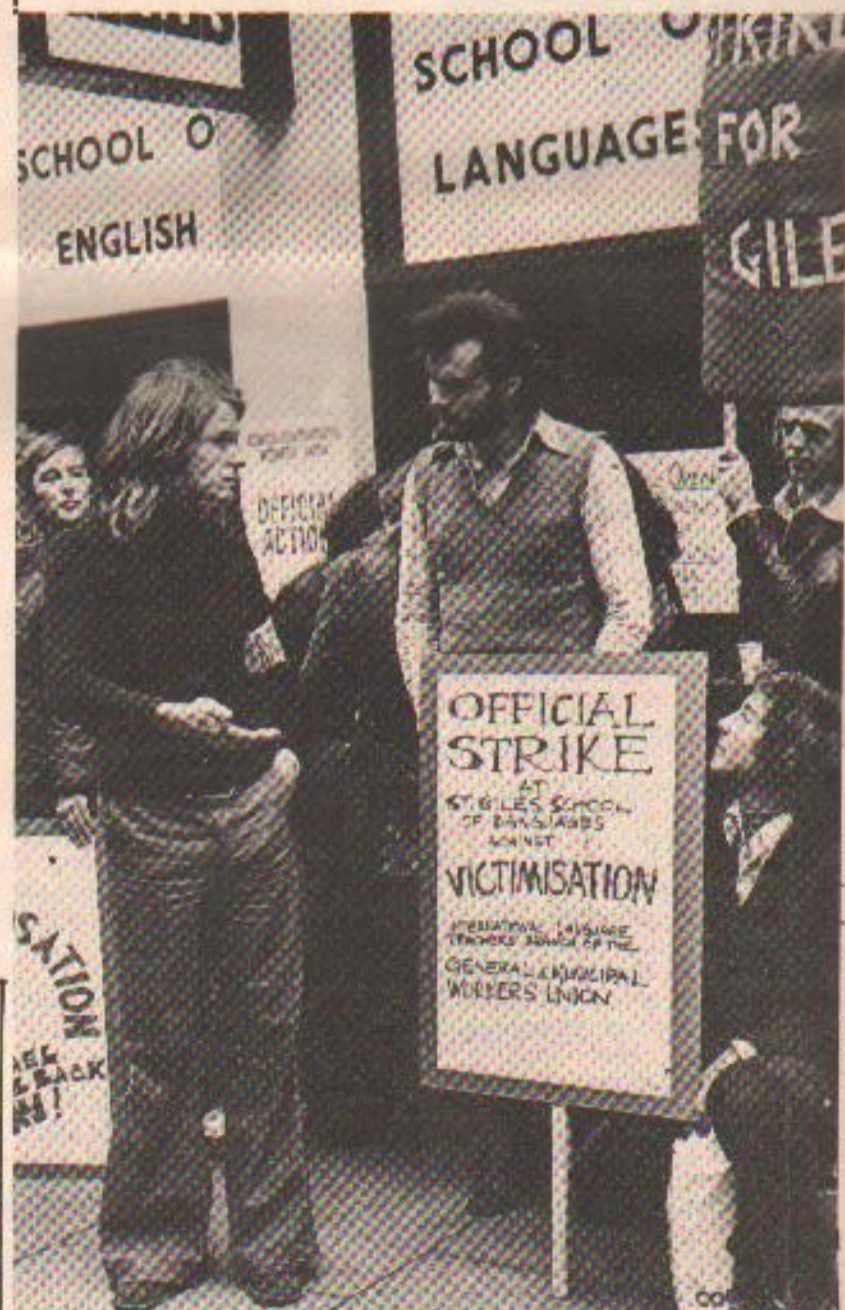
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The first strike at St Giles against victimisation last year was rapidly successful

The last year has seen widespread moves to get teachers in language schools properly unionised for the first time. This has not taken place without a series of sharp struggles in various schools where attempts have been made to victimise leading union activists. Nevertheless, there is now a thriving language teachers' branch of the Managerial, Administrative and Technical Staffs Association (MATSA), the white-collar section of the General & Municipal Workers Union.

But now the language school bosses have launched their most vicious attack yet on the union with the announcement by Paul Lindsay, Principal of the St Giles School of Languages in London — where one successful struggle against victimisation has already taken place — that the school is going to close down because of interference in its running by trade union militants. Interference with his profits, perhaps? But if the struggles that have already occurred in this sector are anything to go by, he will have a hard time carrying this attack through.

Cont. from page 1

(loading and unloading), is docks work and should be contained within the terms of the Docks Labour scheme which defines what dockers' work is and provides very limited cover against redundancy. Recently Michael Foot announced a Bill to give dockers container-handling jobs in a 'corridor' five miles each side of the river, but at best this will get through Parliament in the late Autumn and merely slow down the speed of redundancy.

One of the reasons that national support has not been forthcoming is the lack of any clear understanding amongst the mass of dockers about how redundancies can be fought. By itself, demanding container work be defined as docks work, would only save a handful of jobs — and that often appears to be at the expense of the workers already employed by companies such as Vestey's who move out of the docks proper to avoid being

to pay the wages and better conditions won by years of struggle in the docks.

Again the 'pool' system by which dockers without work were guaranteed a fairly high rate of lay-off pay has been the first step to the dole queue in many instances. Jack Jones of the Transport and General Workers' Union who has issued vicious denunciations of the strikers, helped draft the Jones-Aldington report on which he forced a return to work in 1972 which has done nothing to stop the loss of jobs. It is essential to extend the Docks Labour Scheme to all ports and container depots outside the scheme. But within that a policy of work-sharing with no loss of pay, with the dockers' stewards dividing up the work available amongst the whole workforce is necessary both to extend the London strike, and provide a long term solution to the chronic unemployment situation in the docks.

# KEY ISSUES FACE STUDENT CONFERENCE



LLANDUDNO – the Yarmouth, Brighton and Blackpool of North Wales – is hardly the place you expect the future of the National Union of Students to be decided. Yet next week over seven hundred delegates, representing the student population of Britain, will be gathered there to debate fundamental questions.

What is to be the new leadership of the NUS? What response are they going to make to the attacks by the college authorities on the rent strikes and the grants campaign? What attitude will they take to the question of the EEC? These are the key questions facing the NUS conference.

At the last national conference, the executive promised many things, but there is a saying that actions speak louder than words. For all the bluster of the Communist Party dominated leadership, they have failed completely to carry out their 'election promises'.

## ANTI-INTERMENT

The most important campaign that the NUS took up was that around anti-internment. Steve Parry promised mass pickets, petitions, and thousands outside the Home Office on 28 February. None of that happened. The importance of the Irish campaign – even if it was on the confused basis of the CP 'bill of rights', 'phased withdrawal', and the end of internment – cannot be stressed too much.

Meeting in November amidst the wave of press hysteria after the Birmingham bombings, the delegates passed a motion opposing the introduction of the Jenkins law. But a hundred motions and fine speeches from the Margate promenade are useless unless they are matched by action. But the Scottish NUS, dominated virtually to a person by the CP, did not even take it up, and the 'picket of thousands' was finally called off in disarray.

In the women's campaign the national executive have consistently refused to recall the women's conference until November, despite numerous requests. It has been left to the London Student Women's Action Group to call a national conference of the college women's groups, on 3 May. If the leaders refuse to lead then the membership has to do it for them.

No doubt the next issue due for a dose of reformist rhetoric will be

the anti-EEC campaign. The debate at Llandudno will not be 'for' versus 'against'. It will be on *what basis* the NUS thinks Britain should get out. The NUS, which was at the forefront of the anti-fascist campaign, has a clear position on the likes of the National Front and Powell. But they have to be consistent. The national conference must reject *all* class collaborationist campaigns.

The Scottish NUS, according to the executive report, have already given substantial 'financial and physical support' to the Get Britain Out Campaign. They claim this is fine provided they do not speak on the same platforms as the representatives of the ruling class. But by giving any support to Get Britain Out they give it credibility in the eyes of the mass of students. This rot has to be stopped. The NUS should launch an appeal for a campaign of workers, students and socialist organisations for a 'no' vote. But more than that the NUS should make it clear what sort of Europe it wants – a Socialist United States of Europe.

## VICTIMISATION

The real acid test at Llandudno will be over the reaction to be made to the provocations of the authorities in using the police and the law courts at Lancaster and Surrey universities. The Vice Chancellor at Surrey called his action a 'watershed' in the fight to smash the rent strikes, of which 28 are still going on. That is true – defeat at Surrey will demoralise the other rent strikes and encourage the authorities to take the offensive.

But the rent strikes cannot be separated from the whole grants campaign. At the moment, due to the lack of any other action, they are the grants campaign. More than that, the authorities realise they must break the resistance of students if they are to have any hope of trying to force through more rent and price increases in the summer and autumn terms. The defeat and demoralisation of student militancy is a vital first step to cutting back even further in higher education. This conference has to organise national and local direct action in response to the vice chancellors.

Over the last year the present executive has had ample opportunity to show their ability to lead the student movement – and failed. Now the NUS stands at a crossroads. In the elections for the national executive the liberals, and their kid brother the Radical Action Group of assorted

Tories and liberals, are both standing slates – for the first time in a number of years. The present executive, in not giving the NUS a clear lead in the grants campaign, and by backing down every time the right and capitalist press squealed, have opened the door into which the right have stuck a foot.

## LEADERSHIP

The lack of revolutionary leadership is all too evident. For that reason the IMG called for a single revolutionary slate. The other main revolutionary force inside the NUS, the International Socialists, refused. We consider this to be a sectarian mistake. Minimal unity of revolutionary and other independent socialist forces was necessary to offer a real challenge to the reformist national leadership. The IMG candidates in the elections will make this one of their central points.

But that is not enough. We will also be proposing policies that can take the NUS forward. On the grants campaign we want national and local campaigns of direct action to fight the cuts, area campaigns to involve the small colleges, and links in action with workers in the public sector struggling against redundancies, low pay and the social contract. We will argue that the only solution to the ravages of inflation on our grants can be a *sliding scale* of grants. We want national and local action taken against the vice-chancellors to defend victimised rent strikers in Lancaster and Surrey. These are some of the moves that have to be taken if the NUS and the grants campaign is to make the correct turn at the crossroads it now faces.

# Glasgow strikers stand firm against Labour's strike-breakers



Troops drive past the picket line in Glasgow

The electricians and dustcart drivers of Glasgow remain determined to continue their struggles despite Labour's strike breaking use of troops. But so far they have not been able to break the stranglehold of a trade union bureaucracy which is desperately fighting to hold the line of the social contract.

Having applied the stranglehold, the bureaucrats are now standing back to watch their members go down to defeat at the hands of the state.

A demonstration called on Thursday 27 March by the drivers' strike committee indicated clearly the strengths and weaknesses of the drivers' and electricians' struggle. The march went from the city's Trade Union Centre to form a mass picket on the Polmadie incinerator.

At the picket, strike committee members were able to announce to the strikers and their supporters that they had won sympathy strike action in Greenock, Port Glasgow, Dundee and Nottingham. But in the city of Glasgow itself, only 120 or so people – almost entirely strikers or members of the revolutionary left – could be mobilised for the march.

While the marchers stood at the gates of Polmadie, the occasional Army vehicle sped almost unhindered past the pickets as the daily amount of rubbish collected reached a new high of 1,800 tons.

Hugh Wyper, leading CP member and TGWU District Secretary for Glasgow, who spoke at the picket, was repeatedly called upon to give an explanation of the obvious blocking of official recognition by Jack Jones. His only reply, however, was to argue that everything must go through the process of committee meetings. It is obvious that, left in the hands of the bureaucracy, the decision by the West of Scotland TGWU stewards meeting (representing 60,000 workers) to call for recognition and support action will mean nothing.

The electricians and drivers have been touring West of Scotland industry to call for support and for a West of Scotland meeting of all shop stewards. The need for such a meeting to co-ordinate a massive strike response to Labour's scabbing is increasingly urgent. That way the successes of solidary action outside Glasgow could be built upon.

Stewart MacLennan



Students at Lancaster University vote at a mass meeting to defend the occupation – which was eventually broken up by the police. How will the NUS leadership react?

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